

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-seventh.

GEORGE W. BUSH

Proclamation 7649 of February 28, 2003

Irish-American Heritage Month, 2003

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

From the earliest days of our Republic, America has inspired the hopes and dreams of countless individuals from around the world who have come to share in our gifts of freedom, justice, and opportunity. During Irish-American Heritage Month, we celebrate the contributions of these talented and industrious citizens and recognize their rich legacy of ingenuity, creativity, and achievement.

Throughout our history, America has welcomed millions of Irish immigrants to its shores. These proud people arrived seeking a better life for themselves, their families, and future generations. Many courageous individuals came during the terrible years of Ireland's Great Famine in the middle of the 19th century, and their road to prosperity was not easy. Many faced significant obstacles, including discrimination and poverty. Despite these challenges, Irish Americans have risen to success in every sector of our society.

Americans of Irish descent have played a vital role in shaping our history and culture. Nineteen Presidents of the United States have claimed Irish heritage. One-third to one-half of the American troops during the Revolutionary War and 9 of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence were Irish Americans. Irish Americans explored our frontiers, built many of our Nation's bridges, canals, and railroads, and their proud record of public service helped to fortify our democracy.

In all areas of American life, Irish Americans have made significant and enduring contributions to our great country. America is a better Nation because of the efforts of Irish Americans like Henry Ford, who spurred innovation; Bing Crosby, who entertained countless people around the world; and activist Mary Kenney O'Sullivan, who worked for critical and compassionate social reform. These individuals are just a few of the many Irish Americans who helped to transform our national identity and whose accomplishments reflect the determination, joy, and hope of the Irish. The faith, perseverance, and spirit of the Irish have helped to strengthen our families, our communities, our ideals, and our national character.

Today, approximately one in four Americans can trace their ancestry in part to Ireland's green shores, and we are proud of and grateful for the many Irish Americans who continue to enrich our country.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Con-

stitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 2003 as Irish-American Heritage Month. I call upon all Americans to observe this month by learning about and commemorating the contributions of Irish Americans to our Nation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-seventh.

GEORGE W. BUSH

Proclamation 7650 of February 28, 2003

National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, 2003

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Colorectal cancer touches the lives of many Americans. This year, it is estimated that more than 148,000 new cases of colorectal cancer will be diagnosed. More than 56,000 people may die from this disease, making it a leading cause of cancer death in our Nation. We have achieved great progress in understanding what causes colorectal cancer, and how it develops and spreads. This fourth national observance once again helps increase awareness. Increased awareness can help us reach my Administration's goal, known as "Healthy People 2010," administered by the Department of Health and Human Services, to reduce the rate of colorectal cancer deaths by 34 percent by the year 2010.

Like many cancers, the development of colorectal cancer can take many years. Screening is an important tool to help detect colorectal cancer early by identifying precancerous growths or polyps, when treatment is more likely to be successful.

More than 90 percent of people who are diagnosed with colorectal cancer are over the age of 50. Yet, recent data indicates that less than 40 percent of adults age 50 or older have had one of the available colorectal cancer screening tests within recommended intervals. Researchers estimate that if everyone age 50 or older received regular colorectal cancer screenings, at least one-third of the deaths would be prevented.

Individuals must realize the importance of talking with their healthcare providers about when to begin screening, which tests to have, the benefits and risks of each test, and how often to schedule appointments. To help our citizens detect this disease, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) provides Medicare coverage for regular colorectal cancer screening tests to help detect precancerous conditions or colorectal cancer early.

The National Cancer Institute (NCI), a component of the National Institutes of Health, is the Nation's principal research agency in the fight against colorectal cancer. The NCI invested approximately \$245 million in 2002, and it will dedicate an estimated \$267 million this year to advance our understanding of this disease. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also plays an important role in our ef-